



## DEPARTMENT OF HOMELAND SECURITY

### Coast Guard

### 33 CFR Part 165

[Docket Number USCG-2023-0919]

RIN 1625-AA00

### Safety Zone; Gulf of Mexico, Lower Mississippi River below Head of Passes

**AGENCY:** Coast Guard, Department of Homeland Security (DHS).

**ACTION:** Temporary final rule.

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**SUMMARY:** The Coast Guard is establishing a temporary safety zone for all navigable waters of the Lower Mississippi River below Head of Passes. The safety zone is needed to protect persons and critical infrastructure from the potential contamination due to an oil spill in the Gulf of Mexico. Entry of vessels or persons into this zone, or movement of vessels within this zone is prohibited unless specifically authorized by the Captain of the Port or a designated representative.

**DATES:** This rule is effective without actual notice from [INSERT DATE OF PUBLICATION IN THE FEDERAL REGISTER] through December 17, 2023. For the purposes of enforcement, actual notification will be used from 5 p.m. on November 17, 2023, until [INSERT DATE OF PUBLICATION IN THE FEDERAL REGISTER].

**ADDRESSES:** To view documents mentioned in this preamble as being available in the docket, go to <https://www.regulations.gov>, type USCG- USCG-2023-0919 in the search box and click "Search." Next, in the Document Type column, select "Supporting & Related Material."

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:** If you have questions on this rule, call or email Lieutenant Commander William Stewart, Sector New Orleans, U.S. Coast Guard; telephone 504-365-2246, email [William.A.Stewart@uscg.mil](mailto:William.A.Stewart@uscg.mil).

## **SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:**

### **I. Table of Abbreviations**

CFR	Code of Federal Regulations
DHS	Department of Homeland Security
FR	<i><b>Federal Register</b></i>
NPRM	Notice of proposed rulemaking
§	Section
U.S.C.	United States Code

### **II. Background Information and Regulatory History**

The Coast Guard is issuing this temporary rule without prior notice and opportunity to comment pursuant to authority under section 4(a) of the Administrative Procedure Act (APA) (5 U.S.C. 553(b)). This provision authorizes an agency to issue a rule without prior notice and opportunity to comment when the agency for good cause finds that those procedures are “impracticable, unnecessary, or contrary to the public interest.” Under 5 U.S.C. 553(b)(B), the Coast Guard finds that good cause exists for not publishing a notice of proposed rulemaking (NPRM) with respect to this rule because an oil spill happened 2 days ago, and immediate action is needed to respond to the potential safety impacts associated with oil contamination. It is impracticable to publish NPRM because we must establish this safety zone immediately.

Under 5 U.S.C. 553(d)(3), the Coast Guard finds that good cause exists for making this rule effective less than 30 days after publication in the **Federal Register**. Delaying the effective date of this rule would be impracticable because immediate action is needed to respond to the potential safety hazards associated with oil spill.

### **III. Legal Authority and Need for Rule**

The Coast Guard is issuing this rule under authority in 46 U.S.C. 70034. The Captain of the Port Sector New Orleans (COTP) has determined that potential hazards associated with contamination due to oil spill which happened 2 days ago, will be a safety concern to all persons and critical infrastructure within the Captain of the Port Sector New Orleans area.

#### **IV. Discussion of the Rule**

This rule establishes a safety zone from 5 p.m. on November 17, 2023 through December 17, 2023. The safety zone will cover all navigable waters of Lower Mississippi River below Head of Passes. The duration of the zone is intended to protect persons and critical infrastructure from the potential contamination due to oil spill in the Gulf of Mexico. No vessel or person will be permitted to enter the safety zone without obtaining permission from the COTP or a designated representative.

#### **V. Regulatory Analyses**

We developed this rule after considering numerous statutes and Executive orders related to rulemaking. Below we summarize our analyses based on a number of these statutes and Executive orders, and we discuss First Amendment rights of protestors.

##### *A. Regulatory Planning and Review*

Executive Orders 12866 and 13563 direct agencies to assess the costs and benefits of available regulatory alternatives and, if regulation is necessary, to select regulatory approaches that maximize net benefits. This rule has not been designated a “significant regulatory action,” under section 3(f) of Executive Order 12866, as amended by Executive Order 14094 (Modernizing Regulatory Review). Accordingly, this rule has not been reviewed by the Office of Management and Budget (OMB).

This regulatory action determination is based on duration of rule.

##### *B. Impact on Small Entities*

The Regulatory Flexibility Act of 1980, 5 U.S.C. 601–612, as amended, requires Federal agencies to consider the potential impact of regulations on small entities during rulemaking. The term “small entities” comprises small businesses, not-for-profit organizations that are independently owned and operated and are not dominant in their fields, and governmental jurisdictions with populations of less than 50,000. The Coast Guard certifies under 5 U.S.C. 605(b) that this rule will not have a significant economic

impact on a substantial number of small entities.

While some owners or operators of vessels intending to transit the safety zone may be small entities, for the reasons stated in section V.A above, this rule will not have a significant economic impact on any vessel owner or operator.

Under section 213(a) of the Small Business Regulatory Enforcement Fairness Act of 1996 (Pub. L. 104-121), we want to assist small entities in understanding this rule. If the rule would affect your small business, organization, or governmental jurisdiction and you have questions concerning its provisions or options for compliance, please call or email the person listed in the **FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT** section.

Small businesses may send comments on the actions of Federal employees who enforce, or otherwise determine compliance with, Federal regulations to the Small Business and Agriculture Regulatory Enforcement Ombudsman and the Regional Small Business Regulatory Fairness Boards. The Ombudsman evaluates these actions annually and rates each agency's responsiveness to small business. If you wish to comment on actions by employees of the Coast Guard, call 1-888-REG-FAIR (1-888-734-3247). The Coast Guard will not retaliate against small entities that question or complain about this rule or any policy or action of the Coast Guard.

#### *C. Collection of Information*

This rule will not call for a new collection of information under the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995 (44 U.S.C. 3501–3520).

#### *D. Federalism and Indian Tribal Governments*

A rule has implications for federalism under Executive Order 13132, Federalism, if it has a substantial direct effect on the States, on the relationship between the National Government and the States, or on the distribution of power and responsibilities among the various levels of government. We have analyzed this rule under that order and have determined that it is consistent with the fundamental federalism principles and

preemption requirements described in Executive Order 13132.

Also, this rule does not have tribal implications under Executive Order 13175, Consultation and Coordination with Indian Tribal Governments, because it does not have a substantial direct effect on one or more Indian tribes, on the relationship between the Federal Government and Indian tribes, or on the distribution of power and responsibilities between the Federal Government and Indian tribes.

*E. Unfunded Mandates Reform Act*

The Unfunded Mandates Reform Act of 1995 (2 U.S.C. 1531–1538) requires Federal agencies to assess the effects of their discretionary regulatory actions. In particular, the Act addresses actions that may result in the expenditure by a State, local, or Tribal Government, in the aggregate, or by the private sector of \$100,000,000 (adjusted for inflation) or more in any one year. Though this rule will not result in such an expenditure, we do discuss the effects of this rule elsewhere in this preamble.

*F. Environment*

We have analyzed this rule under Department of Homeland Security Directive 023-01, Rev. 1, associated implementing instructions, and Environmental Planning COMDTINST 5090.1 (series), which guide the Coast Guard in complying with the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (42 U.S.C. 4321–4370f), and have determined that this action is one of a category of actions that do not individually or cumulatively have a significant effect on the human environment. This rule involves an emergency safety zone that will prohibit entry to Lower Mississippi River below Head of Passes. It is categorically excluded from further review under paragraph L60d of Appendix A, Table 1 of DHS Instruction Manual 023–01–001–01, Rev. 1. A Record of Environmental Consideration supporting this determination will be available in the docket after issuance or publication of this rule. For instructions on locating the docket, see the **ADDRESSES** section of this preamble.

### *G. Protest Activities*

The Coast Guard respects the First Amendment rights of protesters. Protesters are asked to call or email the person listed in the **FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT** section to coordinate protest activities so that your message can be received without jeopardizing the safety or security of people, places, or vessels.

### **List of Subjects in 33 CFR Part 165**

Harbors, Marine safety, Navigation (water), Reporting and recordkeeping requirements, Security measures, Waterways.

For the reasons discussed in the preamble, the Coast Guard amends 33 CFR part 165 as follows:

### **PART 165—REGULATED NAVIGATION AREAS AND LIMITED ACCESS AREAS**

1. The authority citation for part 165 continues to read as follows:

**Authority:** 46 U.S.C. 70034, 70051, 70124; 33 CFR 1.05–1, 6.04–1, 6.04–6, and 160.5; Department of Homeland Security Delegation No. 00170.1, Revision No. 01.3.

2. Add § 165.T08-0919 to read as follows:

#### **§ 165.T08-0919 Safety Zone; Gulf of Mexico, Lower Mississippi River below Head of Passes.**

(a) *Location.* The following area is a safety zone: all navigable waters of Lower Mississippi River below Head of Passes.

(b) *Definitions.* As used in this section, *designated representative* means a Coast Guard Patrol Commander, including a Coast Guard coxswain, petty officer, or other officer operating a Coast Guard vessel and a Federal, State, and local officer designated by or assisting the Captain of the Port Sector New Orleans (COTP) in the enforcement of the safety zone.

- (c) *Regulations.* (1) Under the general safety zone regulations in subpart C of

this part, you may not enter the safety zone described in paragraph (a) of this section unless authorized by the COTP or the COTP's designated representative.

(2) To seek permission to enter, contact the COTP or the COTP's representative via VHF-FM Channel 16 or 67 or by telephone at (504) 365-2545. Those in the safety zone must comply with all lawful orders or directions given to them by the COTP or the COTP's designated representative.

(d) *Information broadcasts.* The COTP or a designated representative will inform the public of the enforcement times and date for this safety zone through Broadcast Notices to Mariners (BNMs), Local Notices to Mariners (LNMs), and/or Marine Safety Information Bulletins (MSIBs) as appropriate.

(e) *Enforcement period.* This section will be subject to enforcement from 5 p.m. on November 17, 2023, through December 17, 2023. It will be subject to enforcement this entire period unless the COTP determines it is no longer needed, in which case the Coast Guard will inform mariners via Notice to Mariners.

Dated: November 17, 2023.

K. K. Denning,  
Captain, U.S. Coast Guard,  
Captain of the Port Sector New Orleans.

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